March 12, 2022

Dear Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,
I care about animals and I vote. Please accept my testimony to:

1. SUPPORT with AMENDMENT HB 5293, An Act Prohibiting the Use of Wild or Exotic Animals in Traveling Animal Acts. HB 5293 is a commonsense proposal that will promote animal welfare and protect public safety by prohibiting use of certain animals who are commonly used in circus traveling shows (e.g., camels, bears, elephants, lions, tigers), while providing exemptions for legitimate educational activities.

Wild animals in circuses and other traveling shows are trained with pain and the fear of punishment. They're caged and chained in trucks and trailers, forced to endure months of grueling travel, bullied to perform silly tricks, and are denied everything that is natural and important to them. There is ample documentation and irrefutable evidence that the suffering these animals endure is real and systemic throughout the industry, and that existing laws do not sufficiently protect them. Rhode Island, California, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, Hawaii, and 161 jurisdictions across the U.S., including Stamford and Bridgeport, have passed restrictions on wild animal acts. In 2017, Ringling Bros. ended 146 years of coercive and inherently inhumane wild animal acts.

Please amend line 33 by removing "includes any animal that is not domesticated" because, in other states, some exhibitors have been trying use this exact same phrase to create a loophole that circumvents legislative intent.

2. OPPOSE SB 244, An Act Concerning Wildlife that Causes Damage to Livestock, Poultry, or Bees. SB 244 is a sneaky, backdoor way to allow unregulated hunting of all wildlife, including bears and bobcats. The bill would add extreme vagueness and loopholes into statute, inviting corruption. Such shenanigans are at play because trophy hunting proponents, led by DEEP, know that this bill is hugely unpopular with the general public. (A recent, large study found DEEP's culture to be misaligned with the values of the CT public

(https://sites.warnercnr.colostate.edu/wildlifevalues/.) As a practical matter, SB 244 would encourage cycles of killing rather than the humane, long-term solutions desired by most Connecticut residents.

Science shows that wildlife conflicts are best managed through public education on how to remove food attractants, protective measures (e.g., fencing, electric fencing around beehives, properly secured chicken coops, the use of birthing pastures), and aversive conditioning.

Proponents are arguing that this bill is for farmers, but farmers can already manage "problem" bears. Although hunting of Connecticut bears is currently illegal, DEEP has long relied on a seemingly unrelated trapping statute in order to allow farmers to kill bears doing damage to property (CGS 26-72), as evidenced by a 2009 OLR report ([2009-R-0313](#)) and again in a 2018 OLR report ([2018-R-0265](#)). SB 44 exacerbates the problems caused by DEEP's overly broad interpretation of laws that benefit trophy hunters and actively discourage humane responses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Rossana D. Guizzo
Monroe